



Great River Region Update

4724 Hillcrest Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72205

November 12, 2019

grrdisciples.org

I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in their toil. Eccles 3:12-13)

For everything there is a season. This is a familiar scripture that we turn to in times of change and transition. Even as we approach the winter months, leaving a lengthy fall (depending on which state you live in), we shift based on what is before us. We gather wood for the fireplace, stock up the refrigerator, check our pilot light for the heater, and prepare to hibernate. We prepare for the holidays to spend time with family and friends. We locate and pinch ourselves when seasons change. It points us to peace and surrender to the One in whom we trust.

There is a season that calls us to reflect on our vocation and call as the "priesthood of all believers." We see where our lives have been, where we are headed, where we have served, and where we can do better. And so it is time to say goodbye to one of our own.

Wendy Paquette has been employed with the Great River Region for 20 years and will be leaving us at the end of November. She has weathered many storms and seasons in the life of the Region, our merger from three Regions to one Region, countless staff changes, hurricane Katrina as well as several others, and the retirement of our former Regional Minister. She has provided stability and grounding for those changes to happen, and kept us moving forward.



When I first started in my role here, Wendy wondered who I was and I certainly wondered who she was. I knew immediately that she could be counted on to get the job done. We hunkered down to produce and support 106 congregations and pastors. We made it through the old regional office building sale, mold remediation and working from home, and hectic work and travel schedules. She will be leaving us to enter a time of semi-retirement. I want to personally thank Wendy for walking this journey with me in Regional Ministry for the past four years. We will celebrate Wendy's retirement on November 24, 2019 at 2:00pm at First Christian Church, Little Rock. If you cannot make the retirement celebration, you can send well wishes to Wendy's forwarding address: 10805 Breckenridge Drive, Little Rock, AR 72211

I know that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before him (Eccles. 3:14)

Continued Priorities

- Develop Future Vision Story Strategies and Tactics for Congregational Engagement
- RCOM (Regional Commission on Ministry) nurture of candidates for Ministerial Credentials
- Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism and Boundary Training development for All Clergy
- New Church Committee Development: New Church Planter for Covington, LA Project
- Congregational leadership (laity) training and development

Future Story & Capacity Report Goals:

- To develop transformational Clergy Leaders who foster good collegial relationships and teach each other
- To facilitate and resource congregational program life through the development of the Great River Region Institute
- To re-develop congregations through strategic partnership and new church development
- To seek Racial Reconciliation and justice and full participation of all church in regional life

The last of three Fall Future Story Visioning Sessions was completed in Port Gibson on November 9 – stay tuned for information that was gathered at these sessions.

New Church Update

"The Great River Region in partnership with Grace Disciples Church in Mandeville, LA, and New Church Ministry, Indianapolis, IN, is pleased to announce the calling of Rev. Jarrett Banks as the New Church Planter for the Covington, LA Project. Jarrett comes to us with a wealth of experience in church growth, and a passion for mission, outreach and the unchurched. He will begin his duties on January 1, 2020. Jarrett is no stranger to the Great River Region. He will be leaving First Christian Church, Fort Smith, AR to take on this new role. As he shared with me, "I am not leaving the Region, I am moving to a new position in the Region to help with mission." Let's pray for Jarrett and Lori as they transition to this new location and ministry opportunity."



Rev. Dr. Jarrett Banks, 53, is a 1988 graduate of Wingate College (Bachelor of Science), a 1992 graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Masters of Divinity) and a 2005 graduate of Gardner-Webb University (Doctor of Ministry). He has over 30 years of ministerial experience.

He has served as the pastor of churches in North Carolina, Kentucky, Georgia, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana. His ministry has always been one of inclusion, openness and ecumenism. His writings, podcasts and sermons challenge the church to live in the way Jesus taught in order to transform the world. He is ordained and commissioned by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and currently serves as the Senior Minister of the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

He lives in Fort Smith with his wife of 31 years, Lori. Their son Carson received his Masters in Higher Education from Florida State University and their daughter Sara is a recent graduate of Oklahoma State University. Jarrett's hobbies include running, and he is the Ainsley's Angels Ambassador for Northwest Arkansas, a non-profit organization that aims to build awareness about America's special needs community through inclusion in all aspects of life in addition to ensuring everyone can experience endurance events from 5ks, 10ks to marathons and triathlons.

In our Prayers

Rev. Dwight Bailey ~ Many of you may be aware of the recent accident that Rev. Dwight Bailey experienced while at our Visioning Session in Port Gibson, MS. Rev. Bailey continues to progress and recover. Thank you for your prayers and support, especially our members in the Central Mississippi and Shreveport, LA for stepping up and supporting his recovery. Well wishes can be sent to Rev. Bailey at: The University of Mississippi Medical Center, 2500 North State Street, Jackson, MS 39216.

Rev. Dr. Charlie & Ruth Wallace ~ We send good bye wishes to Rev. Dr. Charlie and Ruth Wallace. Charlie will be leaving First Christian Church, Little Rock, to begin his new role as Senior Pastor of Parkway Christian Church in Davie, FL. And for Ruth as she begins retirement. We will miss them both as they have shared their gifts and life with the Great River Region. May God continue to bless and keep them in their transition.

The Business of the Region

Great River Region September 2019 Financial Statement, click [here](#)

Great River Region congregational giving YTD comparison (DMF, Blessing Box, Designated for Operating and Christmas):

- Giving by Congregation – [September](#) 2019
- Giving by DMF amount – [September](#) 2019

Great River Region Giving as of September 2019:

- Disciples Mission Fund (includes Blessing Box) giving is **down 9.8%**
- Christmas Offering **up 41.6%**
- Designated for Operating is **up 6%**
- Week of Compassion is **down 55.6%**
- Reconciliation is **down 60.3%**
- GRR Operating deficit of **-\$45,668**

Regional Board Update

The November 4-5 meeting has been moved to December 2-3 (5 pm each evening via Zoom conference) and January 31-February 1, 2020 at Central Christian Church in Shreveport, Louisiana



Giving to the Annual Fund of the Great River Region

When you make a pledge to the Annual Fund of the Great River Region, you help strengthen the financial base for the program work that we do in the Great River Region: congregational visits, clergy visits, workshops, camp and conference ministries, Regional Commission on Ministry (RCOM Administration), and regional and general church life and participation.

To donate to the Annual Fund – make your check payable to Great River Region and indicate “Annual Fund” on the memo line.

SEARCH AND CALL

The region currently has five congregations engaged in a search process to call a new pastor:

- Kings Highway CC, Shreveport, LA – Senior Pastor
- FCC, Little Rock, AR – Senior Pastor
- Highland Drive CC, Jonesboro, AR – Transitional Pastor
- FCC Greater New Orleans, Metairie LA – Senior Pastor
- FCC, Leesville, LA – Senior Pastor
- FCC, Berryville, AR – Senior Pastor
- United CC, Jackson – Pulpit supply (contact Bernadine Beasley: bernadinebeasley@att.net)

Constituency Groups: Disciples Women, Youth, Men, MCMC, ASF

DISCIPLES WOMEN

Great River Region Disciples Women President, Renee Eakin, will attend the upcoming Disciples Women Leadership Council meeting in Indianapolis in January.

The Disciples Women Cabinet will meet to plan programs and activities for 2020 on February 14-15.

DISCIPLES MEN SESSIONS 2020

"I Am My Brother's Keeper"

July 10-12, 2020

Texas Christian University
www.sessions.life/2020

Online registration is now open!!
[Click here](#) for more information and
the online registration link
(or to download paper registration form)
Early bird registration ends May 20, 2020

Disciples Men Newsletter is back in print!
Click [here](#) to read the newest issue

DISCIPLES YOUTH

Snoasis 2020 is scheduled for February 28 – March 1.
Registration information coming soon.

GRR Training INSTITUTE

Pro-Reconciliation / Anti-Racism
training dates 2020:

July 2020 – MCMC PreEvent
November 2020 – Regional Assembly

The CHRISTMAS OFFERING supports your Regional Office – December 15 & 22

Me dijeron: ivamos!
COME
they told me
a new born king to see
our finest we bring
to lay before the king
shall I play for you
me and my

2019 Christmas Special Offering
Our finest gifts supporting the Ministries of our Region
Received December 15th and 22nd in many congregations

REGIONS

Ministries that benefit your congregation through the Christmas Offering:

- ✓ Help with ministerial call for part-time, full-time, and interim ministers
- ✓ Strategies for new church starts & transforming churches
- ✓ Camping program for the children and youth of GRR
- ✓ Spiritual leadership for GRR Disciples Women, Men, and Youth
- ✓ Development of the GRR Training Institute for Clergy and Lay Leaders
- ✓ Counsel congregations faced with transition and conflict
- ✓ Pastoral care and support to pastors and their families
- ✓ Opportunities for clergy fellowship clusters

The Great River Region's future story calls us to move forward together. Please prayerfully consider partnering with us by giving to the Christmas Offering. We need financial resources to be a viable ministry for you and all our congregations. Your support will enable us to continue and expand our ministries for future generations. Will you join us in what God is doing in the Great River Region?

